

Gracia Ough Jones remembers ...her Washougal Indian heritage

A Washougal resident, Gracia Ough Jones (Mrs. Reggie Jones) is a granddaughter of Richard and Betsy Ough, who took out the original Donation Land Claim in 1849 that eventually became the town of Washougal.

Gracia's father was John Ough, the youngest of the 10 Ough children.

Richard Ough, her grandfather, was a handsome young Englishman of impressive stature, who left his British man-o-war, to settle at Fort Vancouver, which was then in Oregon Territory. (It became Washington Territory in (date) and Washington State in 1889.)

Richard met and fell in love with a beautiful, light-skinned, young Indian princess, White Wing, daughter of Chief Casanove, who was staying at the fort at the time.

A wedding was soon arranged. "Indian braves and maidens in a fleet of over 100 canoes paddled down the mighty Wauna (Columbia) to Fort Vancouver to see the loved daughter of their chief married to Richard Ough by the resident Factor, Dr. John McLoughlin," it was reported.

According to Gracia Jones, the new Mrs. Ough, given the name Betsy, was not used to hard work, being a favored princess. (The Indian chiefs had slaves then, much like the plantation land owners of the South.)

But the women at the Fort taught her how to cook and keep a home, and she was an apt pupil, becoming skilled at sewing and other tasks. But neither Richard nor Betsy could read or write.

Ten children

The couple had ten children, four boys, Richard, Ben, Fred, and John (who became Gracia's father) and six girls, Sarah, Grace, Elizabeth, Mary, and Cecilia and Emily, both of whom died when very small.

Several years (and one or two children) after their wedding at the Fort, the couple traveled to Forest Grove, Ore., to be married in a religious ceremony by an official minister, which was important to their peace of mind.

Richard and Betsy took up a Donation Land Claim of some 640 acres in the vicinity of the Seal River (now the Washougal) and it became known as "Ough's Place."

Another pioneer Joseph E.C. Durgan bought 20 acres from the Oughs in 1880 to found the town of Washougal.

Betsy Ough, recognized as having unusual intelligence, was a midwife, along with raising 10 children, and was loved and respected throughout her long life.

Her husband Richard died in 1884 at age 90. Betsy outlived him by many years, being almost 100, at best account, when she died.

Gracia was but six years old at her grandmother's death, and three years later she lost her mother, the beautiful Hattie Durgan Ough, 44, a niece of Joseph E.C. Durgan.

So Gracia went to live with her grandmother, Mrs. David Russell, who, being older, was rather strict.

It was Mrs. W.S. Harvey who would take her on the Jesse Harkins, a river steamer, to a Portland landing where they would catch the street car into town to shop for school clothes.

Gracia remembers being often disappointed when she was outfitted in dark colors, her grandmother's preference, when she would have enjoyed light, pretty colors.

She also recalls the muddy, rutted streets of Washougal and the town pump in the middle of Second Street.

There were several saloons, and as a little girl she



GRACIA OUGH JONES

would be sent by her mother into the bar, through the swinging doors, to say that Mr. John Ough's wife was awaiting him outside. (Women were not allowed in the saloons.)

It was a woman, though, Dr. Louisa Wright, who brought her into the world, Mrs. Jones says.

Gracia and Reggie Jones, both University of Washington graduates, lived for 20 years in White Swan, Wash., on a cattle ranch, and for 12 years Gracia was employed at the Yakima Indian Agency in Toppenish.

She enjoyed working with the Indians there and was amused when the Indian women, knowing of her Indian heritage, did not understand why she let her hair remain white, when it is an Indian tradition for women to color their hair black. But they did not reveal their secret color process to her.

Reggie and Gracia at one time owned the Jones Confectionary in Washougal. But life was not always sweet. Their only child, J. Sidney Jones, died at age 10 in 1935 of appendicitis. And Gracia's mother and father, and her brother, L.B. Ough, all died of tuberculosis in mid-life.

Ough relatives

There were many Ough family reunions, Gracia says, when over 100 persons would gather to recall former times. But older members have died, families have scattered, and the reunions, as such, have been discontinued.

Relatives by the name of Ough include two second cousins, Jim Ough of Washougal and Tom Ough of Concord, Calif., and a nephew, Richard Ough, who resides in Yachats, Ore.

Gracia Ough Jones, attractive and vital as ever, appreciates her family history. The beautiful hand-carved walnut bed where Betsy Ough had her ten children, and the matching chest now grace a bedroom of the Jones home.

They are treasured family heirlooms. Also valued are many Indian baskets, beaded leather purses, and historical pictures, including those of her grandparents, Richard and Betsy Ough, who were among the first to recognize the beauty and potential of the Washougal area.

W.S.